

# Working Paper #1

## Purpose, Objectives, and Outcomes

The purpose of the project is to help the State make policy-level decisions on if, where, when, and how to toll by providing a practical step-by-step tolling strategy for Washington State. Although the State has had numerous toll facilities in the past, with the exception of the Washington State Ferries, there are none currently in operation. Two facilities, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project, are authorized as toll facilities and are currently under construction. There are also numerous tolling proposals in various stages of study.

In developing the scope of work for the proposal and in subsequent discussions with Commission and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff, we have refined the purpose, objectives, and outcomes of the study into the following outline:

1. Explore and analyze potential roles for tolling within Washington State.
2. Identify **policy framework** options for tolling in the State. This would address issues such as:
  - a. What makes tolling “feasible”?
    - i. How should we treat objectives of traffic management and revenue production?
    - ii. What is a “fair and equitable” way to choose projects?
    - iii. What screening mechanisms and analysis tools can/should be used to consider toll projects?
    - iv. What are the transportation system effectiveness implications of different types of tolling strategies and projects?
    - v. What are the risks associated with tolling in general and for specific projects?
  - b. The legislation calls for the “development of more uniform and equitable policies regarding the distribution of financial obligations imposed on those paying the tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and opportunities and options for reducing the outstanding indebtedness on the bridge project, including the possibility of buy-downs and other means of spreading the cost of the project more equitably.” What are the implications of potential policies for decision-making surrounding potential toll projects around the State?

- c. How can implementation issues be addressed?
    - i. How can the State be most effective as it implements **tolling technology** from now into the future?
    - ii. What **legal and regulatory** issues need to be addressed?
    - iii. What **organizational and administrative** arrangements are needed to carry out a statewide tolling policy?
    - iv. How can the State address **social and environmental impacts** in a “fair” and “equitable” manner around the State?<sup>1</sup>
  - d. How should policies evolve over the near, mid, and long term?
3. What are the merits of **particular projects**?
- a. State legislation mandates that we study these projects:
    - i. Alaska Way Viaduct,
    - ii. SR 520 Floating Bridge,
    - iii. I-405 Managed Lanes, and
    - iv. SR 704 “Cross Base Highway.”
  - b. The legislation also required this project to support the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) requirements to “address the state highway system and other transportation facilities” in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties to determine the feasibility of value pricing on a facility or network of facilities. Evaluation of all of the above projects would help fulfill this requirement. Additional facilities are under study as part of the Congestion Relief Analysis (CRA) Phase II.
    - i. Other projects around the State are to be studied.
    - ii. This study will not be a comprehensive and definitive look at every potential tolling project in the State.
    - iii. This study has budgeted for 11 unique scenarios in addition to those already being studied as part of the CRA Phase II project. Some of these scenarios must be devoted to meeting the legislatively mandated project evaluations.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Definition of fair and equitable is an early action item in the scope.

- iv. This study has a screening process to help determine which illustrative facilities will be evaluated in this study. No final decisions about particular projects moving forward (or not) will be made as part of this study.
  - v. One product of this study will be a decision-making process through which additional projects can be evaluated over time.
  - vi. This study will not result in so-called “investment-grade” analysis sufficient to support project financing.
4. How should the results of this study be **communicated** to the public?
- a. Evaluate experience elsewhere.
  - b. Develop and carry out a communications plan
5. How should public **attitudes towards tolling** be assessed? We will develop a plan for this. Actual implementation would be done under a separate agreement.

*Section prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc.*